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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/890,435	07/30/2001	Morio Yoshimoto	1163-0350P	1777

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EXAMINER

ENG, GEORGE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2643

DATE MAILED: 09/16/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/890,435

Applicant(s)

YOSHIMOTO ET AL.

Examiner

George Eng

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 July 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-38 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 1.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

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DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The information disclosure statement filed 7/30/2001 has been considered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

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4. Claims 1-7, 10, 16 and 36-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murakami et al. (US PAT. 5,057,940 hereinafter Murakami) in view of Wakabayashi (JP 02128584).

Regarding claim 1, Murakami discloses a video encoding and transmitting device as shown in figure 3 comprising a medium encoding means (121) for object-encoding a video signal supplied from the outside (col. 3 lines 44-57 and col. 7 lines 4-5), and a multiplexer (128a), read as a transmission stream composite means and a stream transmitting means, for combining a part or all of objects encoded by the medium encoding means with a current background image and transmitting the combined video data (col. 5 lines 3-15 and col. 7 lines 15-19). Although Murakami does not specifically teaching that the background image is objected-encoded in advance, Wakabayashi teaches to protect the privacy of a sending party in a still picture video telephone set by replacing a background of the current picture with a previously prepared picture stored in storing means (abstract) so that the background image is encoded in advance. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Murakami in having the background image being objected-encoded in advance, as per teaching of Wakabayashi, in order to protect the privacy of the sending party.

Regarding claim 2, Wakabayashi teaches stream storage means (16, figure 2) for storing background images, which are objected encoded in advance.

Regarding claims 3-4, Murakami teaches the multiplexer (128a, figure 3) for combining video data, which is output from the stream storage means (123a, figure 3) as a background with

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video data encoded by the medium encoding means, wherein the video data is a motion picture image (col. 5 lines 3-15 and col. 7 lines 15-19).

Regarding claim 5, Wakabayashi teaches the video data is a still picture image (abstract).

Regarding claims 6-7, Murakami discloses means for control the multiplexer in accordance with a communication destination (col. 5 lines 3-11).

Regarding claim 10, Wakabayashi teaches to read the image background from the stream storage means (abstract).

Regarding claim 16, the examiner takes an official notice that it is well known in the art of encoding video data in MPEG format, i.e., MPEG-4, in order to reduce the storage requirement.

Regarding claim 36, Murakami discloses a video transmitting and receiving device as shown in figures 3-4 comprising a transmission processing unit having a medium encoding means (121) for object-encoding a video signal supplied from the outside (col. 3 lines 44-57 and col. 7 lines 4-5), and a multiplexer (128a), read as a transmission stream composite means and a stream transmitting means, for combining a part or all of objects encoded by the medium encoding means with a current background image and transmitting the combined video data (col. 5 lines 3-15 and col. 7 lines 15-19) and a reception processing unit having a comprising a stream receiving means (128b) for receiving object encoded video data, a receiving stream composite means (131) for combining a part or all of object in the video data received by the stream receiving means with an object which is object encoded in advance in order to provide a final output image information (col. 5 line 16 through col. 6 line 19). In addition, it recognizes Murakami in having medium decoding means for decoding the video data combined by the

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received stream composition means in order to display the final output image information. Murakami differs from the claimed invention in not specifically teaching that the background image is objected-encoded in advance. However, Wakabayashi teaches to protect the privacy of a sending party in a still picture video telephone set by replacing a background of the current picture with a previously prepared picture stored in storing means (abstract) so that the background image is encoded in advance. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Murakami in having the background image being objected-encoded in advance, as per teaching of Wakabayashi, in order to protect the privacy of the sending party.

Regarding claims 37-38, the limitations of the claims are rejected as the same reasons set forth in claim 36.

5. Claims 8-9, 11-13 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murakami et al. (US PAT. 5,057,940 hereinafter Murakami) in view of Wakabayashi (JP 02128584) as applied in claim 1 above, and further in view of Hibino et al. (JP 06165173A hereinafter Hibino).

Regarding claims 8-9, the combination of Murakami and Wakabayashi differs from the claimed invention in not specifically teaching a voice synthesizing means for synthesizing an audio signal supplied from the outside with an audio signal which is obtained in advance, wherein the transmission stream composite means combines audio data corresponding to the audio signal synthesized with the video data by the voice synthesizing means and the stream transmitting means transmits audio data corresponding to the audio signal synthesized with the

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video data by the voice synthesizing means. However, Hibino teaches a system for attaining virtual society by operating a sound mixer, i.e., a voice synthesizing means, for combining audio signal supplied from the outside with an audio signal, which is obtained in advance (i.e., from a background sound source), with the video data and transmitting audio data corresponding to the audio signal synthesized with the video data by the voice synthesizing means in order to attain virtual society (abstract). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the combination of Murakami and Wakabayashi in having the voice synthesizing means for synthesizing an audio signal supplied from the outside with an audio signal which is obtained in advance, as per teaching of Hibino, in order to attain virtual society.

Regarding claims 11-12, the combination of Murakami and Wakabayashi differs from the claimed invention in not specifically teaching the audio data is output from the stream storage means so that the stream storage means stores either or both of the video data and the audio data which are object-encoded in advance. However, Hibino teaches to retrieve the background sound source and image source from the memory in order to create a virtual society (abstract). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the combination of Murakami and Wakabayashi in having the stream storage means for storing either or both of the video data and the audio data which are object-encoded in advance, as per teaching of Hibino, in order to create the virtual society.

Regarding claim 13, the limitations of the claim are rejected as the same reasons set forth in claims 8-9.

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Regarding claim 17, the examiner takes an official notice that it is well known in the art of encoding video data in MPEG format, i.e., MPEG-4, in order to reduce the storage requirement.

6. Claims 14-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murakami et al. (US PAT. 5,057,940 hereinafter Murakami) in view of Wakabayashi (JP 02128584) as applied in claim 1 above, and further in view of Agraharam et al. (US PAT. 6,414,707 hereinafter Agraharam).

Regarding claims 14-15, the combination of Murakami and Wakabayashi differs from the claimed invention in not specifically teaching to select an object output from the stream storage means according to a communication destination or communication date and time. However, Agraharam teaches to retrieve background information from a database based on an identification of a user, i.e., communication destination, or pre-set by the user in order to make user friendly for selecting desired background image from a listing (col. 4 lines 1-13). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the combination of Murakami and Wakabayashi in selecting the object output from the stream storage means according to a communication destination or communication date and time, as per teaching of Agraharam, in order to make user friendly for selecting desired background image from a listing.

7. Claims 18-24, 27 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murakami et al. (US PAT. 5,057,940 hereinafter Murakami).

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Regarding claim 18, Murakami discloses a video decoding and receiving device as shown in figure 4 comprising a stream receiving means (128b) for receiving object encoded video data, a receiving stream composite means (131) for combining a part or all of object in the video data received by the stream receiving means with an object which is object encoded in advance in order to provide a final output image information (col. 5 line 16 through col. 6 line 19). Although Murakami does not specifically teach medium decoding means for decoding the video data combined by the received stream composition means, i.e., the final output image information, it is old and well known in the art of decoding the final output image information in order to display. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Murakami in having medium decoding means for decoding the video data combined by the received stream composition means in order to display the final output image information.

Regarding claim 19, Murakami discloses a stream storage memory (123b, figure 4) for storing objects, which is object-encoded in advance (col. 5 lines 3-9).

Regarding claims 20-21, Murakami teaches the stream composite means combined video data as a background, which is output from the stream storage means, with the video data received by the stream receiving means, wherein the video data is a motion picture image data (col. 5 lines 16-34 and col. 7 lines 22-26).

Regarding claim 22, it is old and notoriously well known in the art of video decoding and receiving for processing a still picture image data.

Regarding claim 23, Murakami teaches the stream composite means combining an object corresponding to a person part, which is received by the stream receiving means, with an object

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corresponding to a background part, which is object-encoded in advance (col. 6 lines 7-19 and col. 7 lines 22-26).

Regarding claim 24, Murakami teaches to control the stream composite means in response to the source (col. 6 lines 7-17).

Regarding claim 27, Murakami teaches the received-stream composite means (131, figure 4) reading an object from the stream storage means (123b, figure 4), which the object is object encoded in advance (col. 6 lines 7-10).

Regarding claim 34, the examiner takes an official notice that it is well known in the art of encoding video data in MPEG format, i.e., MPEG-4, in order to reduce the storage requirement.

8. Claims 25-26, 28-31 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murakami et al. (US PAT. 5,057,940 hereinafter Murakami) in view of Hibino et al. (JP 06165173A hereinafter Hibino).

Regarding claims 25-26, Murakami differs from the claimed invention in not specifically teaching a voice synthesizing means for synthesizing an audio signal received by the stream receiving means with an audio signal which is obtained in advance, wherein the received stream composite means combines audio data corresponding to the audio signal synthesized by the voice synthesizing means with the video data. However, Hibino teaches a system for attaining virtual society by operating a sound mixer, i.e., a voice synthesizing means, for combining audio signal received from receiving means with an audio signal, which is obtained in advance (i.e., from a background sound source), with the video data in order to attain virtual society (abstract).

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Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Murakami in having the voice synthesizing means for synthesizing an audio signal received by the stream receiving means with an audio signal which is obtained in advance, as per teaching of Hibino, in order to attain virtual society.

Regarding claims 28-29, Murakami differs from the claimed invention in not specifically teaching the audio data is output from the stream storage means so that the stream storage means stores either or both of the video data and the audio data which are object-encoded in advance. However, Hibino teaches to retrieve the background sound source and image source from the memory in order to create a virtual society (abstract). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Murakami in having the stream storage means for storing either or both of the video data and the audio data which are object-encoded in advance, as per teaching of Hibino, in order to create the virtual society.

Regarding claims 30-31, the limitations of the claim are rejected as the same reasons set forth in claims 25-26.

Regarding claim 35, the examiner takes an official notice that it is well known in the art of encoding video data in MPEG format, i.e., MPEG-4, in order to reduce the storage requirement.

9. Claims 32-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murakami et al. (US PAT. 5,057,940 hereinafter Murakami) in view of Agraharam et al. (US PAT. 6,414,707 hereinafter Agraharam).

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Regarding claims 32-33, Murakami differs from the claimed invention in not specifically teaching to select an object output from the stream storage means according to a communication destination or communication date and time. However, Agraharam teaches to retrieve background information from a database based on an identification of a user, i.e., communication destination, or pre-set by the user in order to make user friendly for selecting desired background image from a listing (col. 4 lines 1-13). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Murakami in selecting the object output from the stream storage means according to a communication destination or communication date and time, as per teaching of Agraharam, in order to make user friendly for selecting desired background image from a listing.

Conclusion

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Hansen et al. (US PAT. 6,211,913) discloses a method for removing blank areas from real-time stabilized images by inserting background information (abstract). Lee (US PAT. 6,195,116) discloses a video conferencing system for placing plural images transmitted from plural users separated geographically on the display on each terminal (col. 1 line 64 through col. 2 line 38). Hirabayashi (US PAT. 6,188,726) discloses a coding apparatus to eliminated predetermined image data from input data (abstract). Korn (US PAT. 5,781,198) discloses an apparatus for replacing a background portion of an image (abstract).

11. Any response to this action should be mailed to:

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Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington D.C. 20231

Or faxed to:

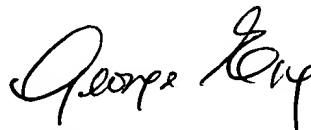
(703) 872-9314 (for Technology Center 2600 only)

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive,
Arlington, V.A., Sixth Floor (Receptionist).

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to George Eng whose telephone number is 703-308-9555. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday to Friday from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Curtis A. Kuntz, can be reached on (703) 305-4870. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-308-6306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.



George Eng

Examiner

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